

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 206.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1857.

PRICE 1^d.

RECKONING THE WINNINGS.

In England, the grand epochs of the year are connected with the fate of grouse and partridges: on the continent, with a thing of far more general and absorbing interest. The great resorts of fashion there, where people crowd to drink nasty water and enjoy, or pretend to enjoy, fine scenery, have a third attraction much more powerful—public and licensed Gaming; and to many, of course, the opening and closing days of the tables are the most memorable dates in the calendar. Paris, although more abounding in eau de vie than in mineral springs, and in monts de piété than in picturesque hills, was formerly the most distinguished of the temples of play, paying two million francs a year to the government for its licence; but it has now lost this dignity by the interference of the legislature, and its great salons de jeu have retired into the dangerous obscurity of the hells of London. One or two other places have likewise been erased from the list, which now chiefly consists of Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, Homburg, Ems, Spa, Geneva, and Monaco.

The gaming season begins in spring, when the leaves come out green and glittering in the sun, and closes in most places on the 1st of November, when they drop sear and withered from the trees. The 1st of November has more general excitement than the opening date, for on that day there comes into play a new element of interest; a new class, hitherto rigidly excluded, being then for the first and only time in the season, permitted to approach them. Many a wistful glance have these latter been accustomed, for months past, to throw at the shut doors; many an investigating look have they fixed upon the pale or flushed faces, the dead or burning eyes, of the privileged classes emerging from them; but now at length their turn comes, they are permitted to enter within the sacred precincts, and to feel in their own experience the glorious excitement of play. The time allowed them, it is true, is short—only a single day; but that suffices for the purpose: a few francs or florins don't take long, and luckily they have no fund to fall back upon when these are swept up by the good-natured bankers. In, therefore, they flock—gentlemen's servants, waiters, hotel commissionaires, petty trades-people of the town, shopmen, neighbouring villagers, agricultural labourers, farm-servants, with the wives of all who have wives to bring, and boys and girls from their first teen to their last—all are welcome to the honour of risking their year's savings upon the identical table which yesterday ingulfed the inheritance of princes.

In the meantime, the members of the other class, for whom the season is already at an end, prepare to carry

elsewhere their haggard looks and aching heads. Some set out for Paris, some for London, some for Vienna, some for Berlin, some for St Petersburg, some for America; a good many lose themselves by the way, and sinking into some obscure pitfall, never turn up again till the following spring; not a few, on getting home, shut themselves up in their room to examine the pin-holed cards they have brought away, containing the history of the campaign, and invent from these data an absolutely infallible system of play by which to lose their money next year; while of those who reach London, a fair proportion forget the way to their clubs and their old landladies, and are fain to swell the competition for cabmen's boxes.

But the bankers? What becomes of them? How have they fared in the conflict? The answer to these questions is curious; and it so happens that we are able to throw some light upon a subject hitherto shrouded in mystery.

We shall take the principal temples of play seriatim, as we have catalogued them above.

Baden-Baden pays an annual licence of 300,000 francs. The present lease is for seventeen years from 1854, a period of eight years being fixed, and the remainder renewable, either on the same terms or at an advanced ratio. In four years, therefore, the bankers will have the option either of giving up their lease or submitting to a perhaps considerable augmentation of the licence. This large sum does not go into the pockets of the Baden government. It is laid out, through a special commissioner of the Baths, in embellishing the place—in gilding refined gold and painting the lily, for the whole locality is a paradise of beauty as it is. The seven less important baths receive only 50,000 francs among them, that of Baden-Baden taking the lion's share. In addition to the licence, the expenses are of course heavy, making up the aggregate costs to not less than 700,000 francs; but notwithstanding this, the net profit of the last season amounted to above two millions! Nor is there any chance of a reduction of this large sum in future years, so long as the place retains the prestige of fashion; for a curious clause in the treaty defends Baden-Baden even against the effects of its own justice or generosity by *forbidding* it to renounce either of its two zeros with which the game of roulette is played, or the *refait*, as it is termed, of rouge et noir. On the other hand, it is not permitted to be too greedy of business; its tables being limited to the present three—namely, one for rouge et noir and two for roulette.

The above is the speculation of a private individual, but the tables of Wiesbaden and Ems belong to a joint-stock company. They pay for the double licence

115,000 florins; but are prepared, it is rumoured, to offer 100,000 florins more for permission to keep their play-rooms open during the winter months. The expenses of this company for the season are estimated at 750,000 francs; yet at the last division of profits, a dividend was declared which entitled each of the 25,000 shares to 49.30 francs. This exhibits a net profit for the season of 1,232,500 francs! Baron de Wellens, the gérant or manager of the society, receives in lieu of salary, for what is reckoned his able services, 5 per cent. on these profits—an allowance which makes up the very respectable income of 61,625 francs or £2465. As this sum, for six months' work, is more than equal to the salaries of all the Grand Duke of Nassau's ministers for a year, it has excited some remark; and at the last meeting of the society to hear the Report, one shareholder, astonished and alarmed at the announcement of so large a recompense, declared that it was absolutely 'scandalous.'

'Well, gentlemen,' said the baron with his usual serene courtesy, 'I admit that the sum which produces this amount at five per cent., and pays you so handsome a dividend, is a large one. I am sorry you are dissatisfied with it: but another year the misfortune might be remedied; and I am sure if I could do anything that would give you satisfaction'—But here he was interrupted by a general laugh, and the Report was received with acclamation. At Wiesbaden there are two tables for roulette, and two for rouge et noir; at Ems one for roulette and one for rouge et noir.

Homburg pays a licence of 50,000 florins, for which it is at liberty to keep the tables open throughout the entire year. The lease is for fifty-five years, of which sixteen have expired; the cost of all buildings, embellishments, and improvements to be defrayed by the society. The capital is divided into 10,000 shares; which received for last season (summer only) a dividend of 53 francs per share, giving a total profit of more than half a million. The owner of more than half these shares is a single individual, M. Blanc, the manager. There are five tables, three for roulette and two for rouge et noir; and they have this remarkable distinction, that the play is with only one zero. This does not affect stakes of less than 500 florins, but still it tends so far towards equalising the chances between the gamblers and the bank, that in April next the second zero, customary at all the other tables, is to be added.

Spa, since the suppression of the tables at Aix-la-Chapelle, has become a flourishing concern. The Company set apart 150,000 francs for the general expenses of embellishment, &c., and then divide the spoil with the state. This year's profits have exceeded a million francs. There is only one table for roulette, and one for rouge et noir.

Geneva, like Spa, pays no licence; but, unlike Spa, it has no connection with the government. Although it has enemies in the state council, however, the company are domiciled in the private mansion of the President of the Council himself, whom it gratifies with a rent of 25,000 francs. The general expenses here are about 125,000 francs, and the net profits 300,000; but this is nothing to its future, if it can only get over the enmity in the council, and be allowed to keep open the tables till the railway from Lyon, expected to be ready shortly, acts as a duct for treasure to pour into

its bank. In anticipation of this, the manager, in imitation of the autocrats of the Opera, has been recently on a tour among the other gaming temples to recruit his staff, and has already at a fabulous sum engaged the services of one of the best croupiers of Homburg.

At Monaco, the society gives the prince one-fourth of the profits, guaranteeing to him 25,000 francs as the minimum. This year its receipts (about 80,000 francs) are said to have fallen short of its expenses; but notwithstanding this, as well as the unfavourable eye with which it is regarded by Sardinia, the prospects of Monaco are good, as by and by a ramification of railways will encircle it like the net of a spider. This is believed to be the only instance in which the reigning prince is a personally interested director of the Bank.

On casting our eye over the foregoing figures, we find that the half-dozen banks we have specified must have gained at play in a single season—putting profits and expenses together—seven million francs. Nor is this extraordinary fact to be taken as something peculiar to the present year: it is probably nothing more than the average annual rate at which the visitors of the places indicated submit to be shorn. And who are these visitors? Our readers may perhaps suppose them to consist of the mass of tourists who throw away here and there, without a thought upon the subject, a handful of five-franc pieces, or a few napoleons; but the fact is, that the most important of the victims are themselves intending victimisers, that the most feathery of the pigeons are the knowing ones, who, after mature study of the doctrine of chances, set forth every year from England, France, Germany, Russia, America, for the avowed purpose—to use their own language—of giving a lesson to M. le Baron de Wellens, of taking the shine out of M. Benazet, and of sewing up M. Blanc!

If these knowing ones, on sitting down to play a game of mere blind chance with a friend, were asked to give him odds, they would laugh at the idea. Odds, they would say, are given only in games of skill, such as billiards, to balance the inequality of the players, but in games of chance there is no inequality to balance. Yet this is precisely what they do with the Banks, which are secured certain odds by their fundamental rules. In playing either with the friend or the bank, however, in this unequal way, it is by no means impossible, despite the odds, that they may win: but with a difference. On finishing the friendly game, they pocket their winnings with a laugh, and determine not to risk them by repeating the frantic play, at which success was a kind of miracle; but success at the rouge et noir table is another matter: their mind is confused by the magnitude and complexity of the whole affair, by the mystery of the bank, the hopeless, fearless, bloodless serenity of the automaton-like croupier; they are incapable of reasoning as they do in the other case; the play, on the same terms, continues from hour to hour, from day to day, from week to week, and if they can hold out so long, from month to month, till they reach the inevitable goal of ruin at last. In the one case, in short, it is possible to win: in the other, impossible.

The principle is so clear, that there would be no chance of mistake, were it not that the prestige of the tables is kept up by the spectacle of temporary

success, while few or none are present at the final result: except when that is signalled by the report of a pistol, the withdrawal of the effigy whose last stake has been lost, and the scattering of the sawdust upon the floor preventing the company for a few minutes, from closing round the table as before, to drink in the absorbing announcement of a new game, *Le jeu est fait*. Not, however, that such catastrophes are common, although they have happened; people are more considerate now-a-days than to enact such scenes in public: when they do sink under their misfortunes—at least, when we English do so—it is into a chair by the tap-room fire opposite the cab-stand.

The reason why the last day of the season is the most popular, may be deduced from the foregoing. The visitors have no second day, or week, or month to insure their ruin: some, therefore, may win; and a single instance of success is worth more to the fame of the tables than a whole village of bankrupts. Only fancy that happy grisette, who, with flushed face, and yet shivering as if from cold, carried to the princely rooms in the morning her whole worldly fortune, which she had hoarded in an old stocking, consisting of two *pièces de cent sous*, and who could hardly be got out of the doors by force at night. She had won; she was winning—what cruelty to break off her golden dream in the midst! Happy grisette! another deal of the cards, another whirl of the roulette, would in all probability have stripped her of every sou; but kind fortune has turned her out of doors, the mistress of six bright and heavy crowns. It is true, Victoire was one of the great majority who lost; but does not her treasure make up for it, and will not the wedding come off just the same as if nothing had happened? This grisette will always be a benefactress of the Bank, for she will become a traditional heroine of her village; and as each new season approaches, her six pieces will be multiplied by report in at least arithmetical ratio.

It is an old notion of ours that if a man will have the folly to throw away his money on so hopeless a speculation, the less he knows of the doctrine of chances, and the less he bothers himself with pricked cards, the more easily he will get off. Many years ago we witnessed a circumstance at Frascati's, in Paris, which quite demolished our faith in the doctrine. The rouge et noir room was well filled with visitors of both sexes, and the playing went on pretty briskly. A new deal took place—*le jeu est fait*—and the company obeyed the signal. The red wins. Some left their money on the red; some transferred it to the opposite side. The red wins again, and is the favourite. Again—again. The players become suspicious: the doctrine of chances is now dead against the red, and the black is loaded with gold and silver. The red wins. The red wins—again—again. People don't know what to do. They have lost enough on the black; but what knowing one would trust the red? They stand looking on, except a few who persist—but cautiously—with the black, and fewer still who put down a trifle on the red with a smile, as if they did it in jest. The red wins. Again—again. The red wins, in short, to the very end; and a game which, without the intervention of the doctrine of chances, ought to have broken half-a-dozen banks, terminated in comparatively little mischief to either side. Whether a circumstance like this ever happened before or since, we cannot tell; but what we have related, certainly did occur in our own presence, at a time when we visited, from curiosity, all sorts of places as well as gaming-tables.

We are not sure that much good has been effected by the numerous moral treatises against gaming, or the equally numerous stories of ruin and misery the habit has occasioned. Gamblers, we fear, don't read moral treatises, and moral examples are looked upon as mere illustrations of the doctrine of chances. But we

are more sanguine as to the antidotal power of the revelations of this paper. Seven millions a year against one is an awkward fact to get over. How do you like giving odds under the circumstances?

THE PARIAH'S REVENGE.

I was once acquainted with a Frenchman who could smoke any two Germans down. He was an artist, and, when I knew him, an exile, having got mixed up in some of the conspiracies against Louis-Philippe; but he always declared that his uncommon skill in the art of consuming tobacco had been acquired during his residence in British India, where he was employed for years in copying sculptures and inscriptions from the ancient tombs and temples for the Institute of France. Of his other experiences in the land of the Brahmins, he was not inclined to talk much on English ground; but one evening when we sat together, and his long pipe was in full play—my friend was generally most fluent then—our conversation happened to turn on the extent of empire England had obtained in the east.

'A curious study they are,' he said, 'the Hindoo and his ruler. Nature never intended the two races to occupy one country: suppose they were willing, it is an absolute impossibility that they could ever understand each other. The Oriental character and that of the Anglo-Saxon are the opposite poles of mankind; hence the rule of England in India has had no moral result. It has familiarised the natives with European commerce, and, to a certain extent, with European science too, but the Hindoo and the Mussulman remain as far from Britain as their ancestors.'

My response was about missions, and schools, and time.

'Well,' said my friend, 'we would never agree, and it's no matter; but I'll tell you an adventure which rather enlightened me on the subject when I was new in India.' This he did as follows:

It was at Agra, the ancient capital, where the sultans of the Persian dynasty reigned and built before the days of the Mogul. The modern city is still of great importance. There are holy places within its walls for Hindoo and Mohammedan, an English garrison, and a considerable trade; but all round stand the witnesses of earlier power and splendour—temples and palaces, and regal tombs—scattered for miles over the country, and interspersed with palm-groves, native hamlets, and the bungalows of the English residents. I had a full twelvemonth's work among them; and among other acquaintances made in my peregrinations, was that of an English family named Jackson. They had what might be termed a strong position in Hindostan. Mr Jackson was a high law-officer for the province; Mrs Jackson's brother was at the head of the Agra custom-house; their son was a captain in one of the regiments of that native army by which England keeps her hold on India; and their daughter was married to one of the Company's judges in Calcutta. With their family interest so well represented, and titled connections in one of the midland counties of England where they were born, you may believe that the Jacksons were rich and important people. They had a house in the city of Agra, chiefly for the transaction of business, and an extensive bungalow in the outskirts, situated on the banks of a rivulet, surrounded by a garden full of Indian flowers, shaded from the southern sun by tall palms, and commanding a glorious prospect of splendid ruins and eastern vegetation. There they lived in a degree of material luxury known only to the Anglo-Indian. Nothing was wanted that wealth could purchase, and they possessed the love for elegance and taste; so the great lawyer and his lady were considered the elite of Agra society, and my acquaintance with them could only be

accounted for on the ground that Europeans out of uniform were rather scarce, that life is somewhat dull in the Company's territory, that the Jacksons wanted their portraits, and that I was wanted to paint them.

They had resided almost thirty years in India, and believed themselves thoroughly acquainted with it and its people. So they might have been as regarded time and opportunity; but unfortunately the Jacksons had brought the English midland counties with them, and never could get rid of the burthen. They reasoned on the dwellers by the Jumna exactly as they would have done on those beside the Trent, and applied the rules of conduct laid down for Jim and Bill, in all the rigour of their Angloism, to Ali and Ranon. Mr Jackson was an upright, honourable man, with little depth and much narrowness of mind. Of his spouse I will only venture to premise that she did not pretend to be interesting, and the only part of her conversation I recollect is a lament over the inferiority of meat in India, and a wonder that the Hindoos did not leave off worshipping idols when they were told it was wrong. Their son—of whom I saw a good deal, his regiment being then in garrison at Agra—was a handsome young man, with very red whiskers, and a great, though silent, esteem of himself; and of their daughter I know only that she was a young married lady of remarkable propriety, and had two really beautiful children, twin-boys, around whom the whole family's affection, and much of its pride, was gathered.

The letters from Calcutta were full of them; their sayings, their doings, and their general progress. They were the theme to which Mrs Jackson returned from the two leading subjects I have mentioned—the topic to which the lawyer came down from his official dignity, and on which the captain condescended to unbend his mind. The twins were now in their fourth year, but the old people had not seen them since their first summer. The distance between Agra and Calcutta made the visit of the judge's lady to her parents rather rare. However, in the third quarter of my acquaintance with the Jacksons, it was publicly announced that Mrs Lester was coming with the dear children, and I was engaged to paint their portraits.

Like most families of distinction in British India, the Jacksons kept a considerable retinue. The requisitions of caste, which always limit the Hindoo's labour, and the indolence superinduced by a tropical climate, contribute to augment the number of these household troops. My friends had servants of all sorts and sizes; but among them there was none in more esteem or trust than a native girl, who acted as Mrs Jackson's own maid, and held besides sundry important offices, such as the charge of the household linen and the dealing out of the spices. They called her Zelle; and when her good mistress was in a hurry, it became Sally sometimes, but I believe her proper name was Zelleya. She was a Pariah, at least she did not object to do or touch anything; but her appearance had something of high caste in it, for that peculiar institution of India has the advantage of making the classes known without the help of dress or equipage.

Zelle had the tall, slender figure, the features of that fine mould which might be termed the classical of Hindostan—the upright carriage and elastic grace, the long, shining hair and pure olive complexion, which distinguish the Brahmin's daughter. She was young, too—I think not more than seventeen. By the way, that is not counted extreme youth in the east; but there was a cold glitter in her black eye, which, in spite of so much beauty, would not have charmed me. I thought Captain Jackson had come to a different conclusion. The near neighbourhood of his garrison made him almost a resident with his parents, and my frequent visits, in the double capacity of artist and friend to the family, enabled me to observe that

Zelle's dress, which was a tasteful compromise between the costumes of Europe and India, was always more studied, and her black hair more carefully braided, when the captain was at home. Of course, it was by accident; but I once espied something very like an assignation in the garden, though, from circumstances too minute to be so long remembered, I believe that the siege did not advance as rapidly as the gallant captain could have wished; and Mrs Jackson had a mighty opinion of her maid. It was not easy to make an impression on the heart of that very respectable lady; but Zelle had achieved it, for the girl was clever and handy. I was told she could mend and clear-starch, mark and cut out as well as any maid from England; that she never had been known to tell a fib, black or white; might be trusted with anybody's wardrobe or jewel-case, and gave no trouble on the score of caste. Mrs Jackson also said that the girl was sincerely attached to her family; and with good reason, for they had been great benefactors to her and all her relations; and the good woman was accustomed to relate how Zelle's life, as well as that of her four sisters, had been saved in their infancy by the attorney-general's interference with that peculiar institution which, in some parts of Hindostan, saves the higher castes the trouble of providing trousseau and wedding-feasts; how her mother had been prevented from becoming a suttee by Mrs Jackson's cousin, then in the Agra mission, 'though the poor creature was scorned for it by all her heathen people, and somehow fell into the Jumna afterwards;' how her three brothers got advice and assistance from every branch of the Jacksons to take up honest trades, when the Company dispossessed them of some land to which they had no right in law; how, in consequence, one had a place in the custom-house, one had become a soldier in the captain's regiment, and one a small merchant in Agra. Mrs Jackson always wound up that recital of benefits by stating, that Zelle had been three years at the school for native girls; that she could read English as well as Hindostanee; that she never refused a tract, and the missionaries had great hopes of her.

Mrs Lester's visit had been expected to take place in that cool and pleasant season of the Indian year, which the English residents persist in calling the winter, because it extends from October to March, and their Christmas dinners come off in the midst of it. Intervening between the time of rain and the fierce heat, it seems the natural season for travelling; but by those many casualties which beset the goings forth of ladies—who will take everything with them, as well as maids and children—the judge's spouse, for he himself, good man, stayed at home in hot Calcutta, found it impossible to set out so early as she had intended; but as she travelled in the most expeditious manner, by boat and palanquin, it was hoped the family would reach Agra before the regular deluge set in. Meantime, my commission to paint the children had widened to a family group. Somebody had suggested that the moment of arrival would be the most striking scene; and as it was necessary to witness the ceremony before transferring it to canvas, I was bound to be at the Jacksons' bungalow in good time on the day the visitors were expected. Having English patrons to deal with, I was punctual. Mrs Lester and company were due early in the afternoon, and the house was on the *qui vive* for hours; but there was no arrival. Towards evening, the rain, which had fallen in occasional showers for some days, as it does at the beginning of its season, came down in good earnest, with a rag-end of a thunder-storm, which we heard raging far to the southward, and the Jacksons comforted themselves with the hope that the travellers had taken refuge in some tomb or ruin, of which there was no lack on their way, and should come on as soon as

the storm ceased and the moon rose. It had been arranged that I should remain till the picture was finished, and a painting-room was assigned me accordingly, situated in a sort of wing which Mr Jackson's predecessor had built for a ball-room; but the Jacksons being quiet people, who gave no balls, had divided it into three, by partitions of Indian matting. The central division was my painting-room, rather better lighted than any artist would desire by two windows looking into the garden; to the right was my bedroom, and on the left a spare apartment, considered the coolest in the house, and, therefore, intended for the much-regarded twins. Partitions of Indian matting, though cheap and movable, have two great faults—namely, that they allow sounds to pass readily, and are apt to shew minute crevices when they get dry. I was standing close by the one which divided mine from the children's room, putting my colour-box in order by the last light of day, and the Indian night gives short warning, when, through the heavy rain, which was coming down in water-spouts, there came a sort of half hiss, half whisper, the queerest sound that ever struck my ear. I was born in France; and there was a crevice within reach of my eye. What need of further apology? There was Zelle, alone, and all wet, as if she had just crept in through the window, which stood open, taking out of her little grass-basket something like a large green ball, which she carefully tucked in under the bolster of the bed. Which of her duties the trusted maid had come to perform so stealthily, I could not guess; but she stepped out of the window, and closed it behind her so swiftly and silently, that I could scarcely believe my eyes when I saw her glide away into the verandah.

The rain continued, and the travellers did not come. Mrs Jackson hoped they had stopped for that day with some of the many friends they had on the road, and the family retired to rest at the usual hour. But the dry season makes crevices in roofs as well as in partitions: the rain had found one just above my bed, and poured in such a torrent, that before it was discovered, the chamber was perfectly uninhabitable. My good hostess, however, requested that I would occupy the children's room for the night, and I had installed myself there with candle and writing-case, in order to write letters which were justly due to sundry correspondents, for I was not inclined to sleep.

The whole house was silent. It was near midnight; and I was half-way in a letter to Armandine—we were friends then—when a slight rustle made me look up, and there stood Zelle as erect and composed as if she had come for one of the oft-mentioned tracts.

'Saib,' said she, 'there's a cobra in your bed: I smelled it as I passed your door, for my family were serpent-charmers. What will you give me if I take it away?'

'How did it come there?' said I, pretending to write on, though my pen was making cobras on the paper, for the green ball I had seen taken out of the basket recurred to my memory, and I knew the said serpent to be one of the most deadly of its kind. The Portuguese settlers call it the capella or hooded-snake, by which name it is known in Europe; but it had obviously not been placed under the bolster for me; and as Zelle replied quite innocently—

'I don't know, saib,' my resolution was taken, though it certainly was not the best policy.

'I'll give you half a rupee,' said I; and with a quiet gesture of assent to the bargain, Zelle approached the bed, turned up the bolster, and, without haste or fear, lifted out the deadly thing, coiled up exactly as she had laid it in; and, may I be forgiven, but I half wished it might bite her. Nothing of the kind happened to Mrs Jackson's maid: she laid the cobra carefully into her muslin apron, opened the window, and stepped out into the garden. The rain had

ceased, and the moon was shining. I saw her go down the walk straight to the outer gate. She opened it too, and I followed her; but long before I could reach the gate, it was locked behind her, and the girl was out of sight. I returned to my writing-table, certain that she would come back for the half-rupee; and in less than half an hour, back Zelle came by the very way she went, and calmly closed the window, saying:

'Now, Saib, the cobra's at home with his friends, and has promised never to come near your bed again.'

'Very well, Zelle,' said I, getting between her and the door, 'I have promised you a half-rupee, and I will give it to you, but I saw you put that cobra in the bed this evening. If you tell me why you did so, I will not mention it to any of the family till you are two days safe out of the house; and if you do not, I will rouse them all, and tell them this instant.'

Zelle looked to see whether there was any way of escape, but I had my eye on the window; then her face took the fixed, stony look of the Eastern, who knows his destiny is not propitious.

'Saib,' said she, 'I put it there to kill the judge's children. My mother sent it to me, to be revenged on this family for all the evil they have done to ours. Listen, and I will tell you the truth, for you do not come from England. My father was a Brahmin and a Zemindar; he inherited his land by adoption into the family of our ancient neighbour Guzroo, and the Saib Lester, who then gave law in Agra, took it from him, saying he had no right, and it belonged to the Company. It had always been the custom to rear but one daughter in our house, and in due time that daughter was wedded, with a marriage-feast becoming a family of high caste; but the Saib Jackson found out this custom, and so frightened our people with his law that all the girls grew up. When my father's soul departed, my mother determined to become a suttee, according to the custom of her ancestors, that the family might have honour in this world and in paradise; but the preaching Saib, who is also one of the Jacksons, talked so much, that fear came upon her when the pile was ready, and she could not perform the ceremony. Now, see what the doings of these hogs, who eat everything, have brought upon my people. By the loss of his land, my father could not make the accustomed offerings; he therefore lost his standing in the temples and in the favour of the gods. By the loss of their inheritance, my brothers were brought down to trades beneath their castes. There was no means to make marriage-feasts for five daughters; no all sisters are therefore married to low-caste men, and I am a Pariah, drinking out of common vessels, and going abroad with an unveiled face. My mother was so despised by her neighbours and at the holy places, that she would not live, but threw herself into the Jumna, an offering to the goddess Durgá, who will not refuse even the polluted. By her favour, she has reached the transmigration of the serpent, and sent the cobra to me that we might be avenged on this family, who worship nothing but rupees, and think to buy heaven and earth with them. Now, Saib, give me my wages, for I have taken away the cobra and told you the truth.'

'I did not venture to reason with the maid of whom the missionaries had hopes. She took her half-rupee, and glided away to her own room. My own sleep was not sound that night, and in the morning Zelle was nowhere to be found. Neither mistress nor servants could give any account of her, but that she had performed her accustomed duties, and retired to rest as usual; that her room was all in order, and her trinkets and best clothes gone with her. I resolved to keep my promise, and let the two days elapse; but in the interim, I could not resist telling the story to a countryman and confidential friend of mine, who had been for fifteen years a silk-merchant in Agra.

'Take my advice,' said he, 'and say nothing about it. I know something of the English; they'll wonder why you did not immediately tell her master—what business you had to look through chinks—in short, they won't believe you; and if the girl's disappearance produces no worse effect on your reputation, you will be set down as a Jesuit in disguise; and I understand the Jacksons are stiff Protestants; yet it might be as well to warn the family by an anonymous letter.'

I took his advice, and the letter was sent; but not being in their confidence, the Jacksons never mentioned it to me.

The lady deeply regretted the absence of her handy maid. Mr Jackson made diligent inquiries after her, but all to no purpose; but some time after, the part of her doings which most puzzled me was cleared up. Why, do you think, did she come to remove the cobra? Not for the half-rupee alone; but her brother, the merchant at Agra, happened to be the very man from whom I was in the habit of purchasing trifles for myself and presents for my friends at home, and the bill I owed him just then saved my life.

The children arrived a week after, and I painted the family group. I saw Zelle dancing as a nautch-girl at one of the festivals at Delhi. I heard in the following summer that the twins had died from the bite of a serpent received in the garden of their father's country-house near Calcutta; and since then I never went to bed in India without looking narrowly under the bolster.

A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.

LOST WOMEN.

I ENTER on this subject with a hesitation strong enough to have prevented my entering on it at all, did I not believe that to write for or concerning women, and avoid entirely that deplorable phase of womanhood which, in country cottages as in city streets, in books, newspapers, and daily talk, meets us so continually that no young girl can long be kept ignorant of it, would be to give a one-sided and garbled view of life, which, however pretty and pleasant, would be false, and being false, useless. We have not to construct human nature afresh, but to take it as we find it, and make the best of it: we have no right, not even the most sensitive of us women, mercifully constituted with less temptation to evil than men, to treat as impure what God has not made impure, or to shrink with sanctimonious ultra-delicacy from the barest mention of things which, though happy circumstances of temperament or education have shielded us from ever being touched or harmed thereby, we must know to exist. If we do not know it, our ignorance—quite a different thing from innocence—is at once both helpless and dangerous: narrows our judgment, exposes us to a thousand painful mistakes, and greatly limits our power of usefulness in the world.

On the other hand, a woman who is for ever paddling needlessly in the filthy puddles of human nature, just as a child delights in walking up a dirty gutter when there is a clean pavement beside it, deserves, like the child, whatever mud she gets. And there is even a worse kind of woman still, only too common among respectable matrons, talkative old maids, and even worldly fascinating young ones, who is ready to rake up every scandalous tale, and titter over every vile *double entendre*, who degrades the most solemn mysteries of holy Nature into vehicles for disgraceful jokes, whose mind, instead of being a decent dwelling-house, is a perfect Augean stable of uncleanness. Such a one cannot be too fiercely reprobated, too utterly despised. However intact her reputation, she is as great a slur

upon womanhood, as great a bane to all true modesty, as the most unchaste Messalina who ever disgraced her sex.

I beg to warn these foul grubbers in the dark places of the earth—not for purposes of cleansing, but merely because it amuses them—that they will not find anything entertaining in this article. They will only find one woman's indignant protest against a tone of thought and conversation which, as their consciences will tell them, many other women think it no shame to pursue when among their own sex; and which, did the other sex know it, would injure as much as any open vice, by making men disbelieve in virtue—disbelieve in us. As to its vileness in the sight of Heaven—truly many a well-reputed British matron may be considered as much a 'lost' woman as any poor, seduced creature whose child is born in a workhouse, or strangled at a ditch-side.

It is to this class, who have fallen out of the ranks of honest women, without sinking to a lower depth still, that I chiefly refer: because with them, those for whom those papers are meant—namely, the ordinary middle ranks of unmarried females—are more likely to have to do. That other class—awful in its extent and universality—of women who make a trade of sin, whom philanthropists and political economists are for ever discussing, and can come to no conclusion about—this I leave to the wise and generous of both sexes who devote their lives to the subject; to the examination and amelioration of a fact so terrible that, were it not a fact, one would hardly be justified in alluding to it here. Wretched ones! whom even to think of turns any woman's heart cold, with shame for her own sex, and horror at the other: outcasts to whom happiness and love are things unknown; God and heaven mere words to swear with; and to whom this earth must be a daily hell:

Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda, e passa.

But the others cross our path continually. No one can have taken any interest in the working-classes without being aware how frightfully common among them is what they term 'a misfortune'—how few young women come to the marriage-altar at all, or come there just a week or two before maternity; or having already had several children, often only half brothers and sisters, whom no ceremony has ever legalised. Whatever be the causes of this—and I merely skim over the surface of a state of things which *Times* and sanitary commissioners have plumbed to sickening depths—it undoubtedly exists; and no single woman who takes any thought of what is going on around her, no mistress or mother who requires constantly servants for her house, and nursemaids for her children, can or dare blind herself to the fact. It is easy for tenderly reared young ladies, who study human passions through Miss Austen or Miss Edgeworth, or the *Loves of the Angels*, to say: 'How shocking! Oh, it can't be true.' But it is true; and they will not live many more years without finding it to be true. Better face truth at once, in all its bareness, than be swaddled up for ever in the folds of a silken falsehood.

Another fact, stranger still to account for, is that the women who thus fall are by no means the worst of their class. I have heard it affirmed by more than one lady—by one in particular, whose experience is as large as her benevolence—that many of them are of the very best—refined, intelligent, truthful, and affectionate.

'I don't know how it is,' she would say—'whether their very superiority makes them dissatisfied with their own rank—such brutes or clowns as labouring men often are!—so that they fall easier victims to the rank above them; or whether, though this theory will shock many people, other virtues can exist and flourish, entirely distinct from, and after the loss of,

that which we are accustomed to believe the indispensable prime virtue of our sex—chastity. I cannot explain it; I can only say that it is so: that some of my most promising village-girls have been the first to come to harm; and some of the best and most faithful servants I ever had, have been girls who have fallen into shame, and who, had I not gone to the rescue, and put them on the way to do well, would infallibly have become "lost" women.'

There, perhaps, is one clue caught. Had she not 'come to the rescue.' Rescue, then, is possible; and they were capable of being rescued.

I read lately an essay, and from a pure and good woman's pen too, arguing, what licentious materialists are now-a-days unblushingly asserting, that chastity is not indispensable in our sex; that the old chivalrous boast of families—all their men were brave, and all their women virtuous—was, to say the least, a mistake, which led people into worse ills than it remedied, by causing an extravagant terror at the loss of these good qualities, and a corresponding indifference to evil ones much more important.

While widely differing from this writer—for God forbid that our Englishwomen should ever come to regard with less horror than now the loss of personal chastity—I think it cannot be doubted that even this loss does not indicate total corruption or entail permanent degradation; that after it, and in spite of it, many estimable and womanly qualities may be found existing, not only in our picturesque *Nell Gwynnes* and *Peg Woffingtons*, but our poor everyday sinners: the servant obliged to be dismissed without a character and with a baby; the sempstress quitting starvation for elegant infamy; the illiterate village lass, who thinks it so grand to be made a lady of—so much better to be a rich man's mistress than a working-man's ill-used wife, or rather slave.

Till we allow that no one sin, not even this sin, necessarily corrupts the entire character, we shall scarcely be able to judge it with that fairness which gives hope of our remedying it, or trying to lessen in ever so minute degree, by our individual dealing with any individual case that comes in our way, the enormous aggregate of misery that it entails. This it behoves us to do, even on selfish grounds, for it touches us closer than many of us are aware—ay, in our hearths and homes—in the sons and brothers that we have to send out to struggle in a world of which we at the fireside know absolutely nothing; if we marry, in the fathers we give to our innocent children, the servants we trust their infancy to, and the influences to which we are obliged to expose them daily and hourly, unless we were to bring them up in a sort of domestic Happy Valley, which their first effort would be to get out of as fast as ever they could. And supposing we are saved from all this; that our position is one peculiarly exempt from evil; that if pollution in any form comes nigh us, we just sweep it hastily and noiselessly away from our doors, and think we are all right and safe. Alas! we forget that a refuse-heap outside her gate may breed a plague even in a queen's palace.

One word, before continuing this subject. Many of us will not investigate it because they are afraid: afraid, not so much of being, as of being thought to be, especially by the other sex, incorrect, indelicate, unfeminine; of being supposed to know more than they ought to know, or than the present refinement of society—a good and beautiful thing when real—concludes that they do know.

O women, women, why have you not more faith in yourselves—in that strong inner purity which alone can make a woman brave! which, if she knows herself to be clean in heart and desire, in body and soul, loving cleanness for its own sake, and not for the credit that it brings her, gives her a freedom of

action and a fearlessness of consequences which are to her a greater safeguard than any external decorum. To be, and not to seem, is the amulet of her innocence.

Young women, who look forward to marriage and motherhood, in all its peace and dignity, as your natural lot, have you ever thought for a moment what it must be to feel that you have lost innocence, that no power on earth can ever make you innocent any more, or give you back that jewel of glory and strength, having which, as the old superstition believed,

Even the lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity?

That, whether the world knows it or not, you know yourself to be—not this. The free, happy ignorance of maidenhood is gone for ever; the sacred dignity and honour of matronhood is not, and never can be attained. Surely this consciousness alone must be the most awful punishment to any woman; and from it no kindness, no sympathy, no concealment of shame, or even restoration to good repute, can entirely free her. She must bear her burden, lighter or heavier as it may be at different times, and she must bear it to the day of her death. I think this fact alone is enough to make a chaste woman's first feeling towards an unchaste that of unqualified, unmitigated pity.

This, not in the form of exaggerated sentimentalism, with which it has of late been the fashion to treat such subjects, laying all the blame upon the seducer, and exalting the seduced into a paragon of injured simplicity, whom society ought to pet, and soothe, and treat with far more interest and consideration than those who have never erred. Never, as it seems to me, was there a greater mistake than that into which some writers have fallen, in fact and fiction, but especially in fiction, through their generous over-eagerness to redeem the lost. These are painted—one heroine I call to mind now—as such patterns of excellence, that we wonder, first, how they ever could have been led astray; and secondly, whether this exceeding helplessness and simplicity of theirs did not make the sin so venial, that it seems as wrong to blame them for it as to scold a child for tumbling into an open well. Consequently, their penitence becomes unnecessary and unnatural; their suffering, disproportionately unjust. You close the book inclined to arraign society, morality, and, what is worse, Providence; for all else, feeling that the question is left much as you found it; that angelic sinners such as these, if they exist at all, are such exceptions to the generality of their class, that their example is of very little practical service.

To refine away error till it is hardly error at all; to place vice under such extenuating circumstances that we cannot condemn it for sheer pity, is a fault so dangerous that charity herself ought to steel her heart against it. Far better and safer to call crime by its right name, and paint it in its true colours—treating it even as the Ragged Schools did the young vagabonds of our streets—not by persuading them and society that they were clean, respectable, ill-used, and maligned individuals; or by waiting for them to grow decent before they dealt with them at all, but by simply saying: 'Come, just as you are—ragged, and dirty, and dishonest. Only come, and we will do our best to make you what you ought to be.'

Allowing the pity, which, as I said, ought to be a woman's primary sentiment towards her lost sisterhood, what is the next thing to be done? Surely there must be some light beyond that of mere compassion to guide her in her after-conduct towards them.

Where shall we find this light? In the world and its ordinary code of social morality, suited to social convenience? I fear not. The general opinion, even among good men, seems to be that this great question

is a very sad thing, but a sort of unconquerable necessity; there is no use in talking about it, and indeed the less it is talked of the better. Good women are much of the same mind. The laxer-principled of both sexes treat the matter with philosophical indifference, or with the kind of laugh that makes the blood boil in any truly virtuous heart.

Then, where are we to look?

'I came not to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance.'

'Neither do I condemn thee: go and *sin no more*.'

'Her *sins*, which are many, are forgiven; because she loved much.'

These words, thus quoted here, may raise a sneer on the lips of some, and shock others who are accustomed to put on religion with their Sunday clothes, and take it off on Monday, as quite too fine, maybe too useless for everyday wear. But I must write them, because I believe them. I believe there is no other light on this difficult question than that given by the New Testament. There, clear and plain, and everywhere repeated, shines the doctrine, of which until then there was no trace either in external or revealed religion, that for every crime, being repented of and forsaken, there is forgiveness with Heaven; and if with Heaven, there ought to be with men. This, without entering at all into the doctrinal question of atonement; but simply taking the basis of Christian morality, as contrasted with the natural morality of the savage, or even of the ancient Jew, which without retribution presupposes no such thing as pardon.

All who have had any experience among criminals—from the poor little 'black sheep' of the family, who is always getting into trouble, and is told continually by everybody that strive as he will, he never can be a good boy, like brother Tommy, down to the lowest, most reprobate convict, who is shipped off to Norfolk Island, because the mother-country cannot exactly hang him, and does not know what else to do with him—unite in stating that, when you shut the door of hope on any human soul, you may at once give up all chance of its reformation. As well bid a man eat without food, see without light, or breathe without air, as bid him amend his ways, while, at the same time, you tell him that however he amends, he will be in just the same position—the same hopelessly degraded, unpardoned, miserable sinner.

Yet this is practically the language used to fallen women, and chiefly by their own sex: 'God may forgive you, but we never can!'—a declaration which, however common, in spirit if not in substance, is, when one comes to analyse it, unparalleled in its arrogance of blasphemy.

That for a single offence, however grave, a whole life should be blasted, is a doctrine repugnant even to nature's own dealings in the visible world. There, her voice clearly says—Let all these wonderful powers of vital renewal have free play: let the foul flesh slough itself away; lop off the gangrened limb; enter into life maimed if it must be: but never, till the last moment of total dissolution, does she say: 'Thou shalt not enter into life at all.'

Therefore, once let a woman feel that, in moral as in physical disease, 'while there is life there is hope'—dependent on the one only condition, that she shall *sin no more*, and what a future you open for her! what a weight you lift off from her poor miserable spirit, which might otherwise be crushed down to the lowest deep, to that which is far worse than any bodily pollution, ineradicable corruption of soul.

The next thing to be set before her is courage. That intolerable dread of shame, which is the last token of departing modesty, to what will it not drive some women! To what self-control and ingenuity,

what resistance of weakness and endurance of bodily pain, which, in another cause, would be called heroic—blunting every natural instinct, and goading them on the last refuge of mortal fear—infanticide!

Surely even by this means, many a woman might be saved, if there were any one to save her; any one to say plainly: 'What are you afraid of—God or man—your sin or its results?' Alas, it will be found almost invariably the latter: loss of position, of character, and consequently of the means of livelihood. Respectability shuts the door upon her; mothers will not let their young folks come into contact with her; mistresses will not take her as a servant. Nor can one wonder at this, even while believing that in many cases the fear is much more selfish than virtuous, and continued long after its cause is entirely obviated. It is one of the very few cases in which—at least at first—the sufferers cannot help themselves; they must suffer: they must bear patiently for a season the effects of the immutable law which makes sin, sooner or later, its own Nemesis.

But not for ever—and it is worth while, pausing over this insane terror of worldly opinion, to ask: 'Which half of the world are you afraid of, the good or the bad?' For it may often be noticed, the less virtuous people are, the more they shrink away from the slightest whiff of this odour of un-sanctity. The good are ever the most charitable, the pure are the most brave. I believe there are hundreds and thousands of Englishwomen who would willingly throw the shelter of their stainless repute around any poor creature who came to them and said honestly: 'I have sinned—help me that I may sin no more.' But the unfortunates will not believe this. They are like the poor Indians who think it necessary to pacify the evil principle by a greater worship than that they offer to the Good Spirit; because, they say, he is the stronger. Have we not, even in this Britain, far too many such tacit devil-worshippers?

Given a chance, the smallest chance, and a woman's redemption lies in her own hands. She cannot be too strongly impressed with this fact, or too soon. No human power could have degraded her against her will: no human power can keep her in degradation unless by her will. Granted the sin, howsoever incurred, willfully or blindly, or under circumstances of desperate temptation; capable of some palliations, or with no palliation at all—take it just as it stands in its whole enormity, and—there leave it. Set it aside, at once and altogether, and begin anew. Better beg, or hunger, or die in a ditch—except that the people who die in ditches are not usually the best of even this world's children—than live a day in voluntary dishonour.

This may sound fine and romantic—far too romantic, forsooth, to be applied to any of the cases that we are likely to meet with. And yet it is the plain truth: as true of a king's mistress as of a ruined servant-maid. No help from without can rescue either, unless she wishes to save herself.

She has more power to do this than at first appears; but it must be by the prime agent, truth.

After the first false step, the principal cause of women's further downfall is their being afraid of truth—truth, which must of necessity be the beginning and end of all attempts at restoration to honour. For the wretched girl, who, in terror of losing a place, or of being turned from an angry father's door, fabricates tale after tale, denies and denies till she can deny no longer, till all ends in a jail and a charge of child-murder; for the fashionable lady whose life is a long deceit, exposed to constant fear lest a breath should tear her flimsy reputation to rags; and for all the innumerable cases between these two poles of society, there is but one warning—No virtue ever was founded on a lie.

The truth, then, at all risks and costs—the truth

from the beginning. Make a clean breast to whomsoever you need to make it, and then—face the world.

This must be terrible enough—no denying that; but it must be done: there is no help for it. Perhaps, in many a case, if it were done at once, it would save much after-misery, especially the perpetual dread and danger of exposure which makes the sin itself quite a secondary consideration compared with the fear of its discovery. This once over, with all its paralysing effects, the worst has come to the worst, and there is a chance of hope.

Begin again. Put the whole past life aside as if it had never been, and try what you can do with the future. This, I think, should be the counsel given to all erring women not irretrievably 'lost.'

It would be a blessed thing if our honourable women, mothers and matrons, would consider a little more what could be done with such persons: any openings for useful employment; any positions sufficiently guarded to be safe, and yet free enough to afford trial, without drawing too harshly the line—always harsh enough—between these and those who are of unblemished reputation. Reformatories, Magdalen institutions, and the like, are admirable in their way; but there are always a host of cases in which individual judgment, or help, is the only thing possible. It is this—these thoughts which shall lead to acts, that I desire to suggest to individual minds, in the hope of arousing that imperceptible small influence of the many, which forms the strongest lever of a community.

I said, in a former paper, that the only way to make people good, is to make them happy. Strange that this fact should apply to circumstances like these now written of; and yet it does; and it would be vain to set it aside. Bid a woman lift up her head and live; tell her that she can and ought to live; and you must give her something to live for. You must put into her poor sore heart, if you can, a little more than peace—comfort. And where is she to find it?

It may appear a strange doctrine to some, but it seems to me that Heaven always leaves its sign of hope and redemption on any woman when she is left with a child. Some taste of the ineffable joy, the solemn consecration of maternity, must come even to the most wretched and guilty, on feeling the double life she bears, or the helpless life to which she has given birth—that life for which she is as responsible to God, to itself, and to the world, as any married mother of them all.

And the sense of responsibility alone conveys a certain amount of comfort and hope. One can imagine many a sinful mother, who, for the very child's sake, would learn to hate the sin, and to make to the poor innocent the only atonement possible, by giving it what is better even than stainless birth—a virtuous bringing-up. One can conceive such a woman taking her baby in her arms, and starting afresh to face the world—made bold by a love that has no taint in it, and cheered by the knowledge that no human being can take from her either this love, or its duties, or its rewards.

For it rests with herself alone the comfort she may derive from, and the honour in which she may be held by her child. A mother's subsequent conduct and character might give a son as much pride in her, and in the nameless parentage which he owes her, as in any long lawful line.

Whose ignoble blood

Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood.

Even a daughter might live to say: 'Mother, do not grieve; I had rather have had you, just as you are, than any mother I know. It has been better, for me at least, than if you had married my father.'

I have written thus much, and yet, after all, it seems but 'words, words, words.' Everywhere around us we

see women falling, fallen, and we cannot help them; we cannot make them feel the hideousness of sin, the peace and strength of that cleanness of soul which is not afraid of anything in earth or heaven; we cannot force upon their minds the possibility of return, after ever so long wanderings, to those pleasant paths out of which there is no peace and no strength for either man or woman; and in order to this return is needed—for both alike—not so much outside help, as inward repentance.

All I can do—all, I fear, that any one can do by mere speech—is to impress upon every woman, and chiefly on those who, reared innocently in safe homes, view the wicked world without like gazers at a show or spectators at a battle—shocked, wondering, perhaps pitying a little, but not understanding at all—that this repentance is possible also; that once having returned to a chaste life, a woman's former life should never once be 'cast up' against her; that she should be allowed to resume, if not her pristine position, at least one that is full of usefulness, pleasantness, and respect—a respect the amount of which must be determined by her own daily conduct. She should be judged—as indeed human wisdom alone has a right to judge, in all cases—solely by what she is now, and not by what she has been. That judgment may be, ought to be, stern and fixed as justice itself with regard to her present, and even her past, so far as concerns the crime committed; but it ought never to take the law into its own hands towards the criminal, who, for all it knows, may have long since become less a criminal than a sufferer. Virtue degrades herself, and loses every vestige of her power, when her dealings with vice sink into a mere matter of individual opinion, personal dislike, or selfish fear of harm. For all offences, punishment retributive and inevitable, must come; but punishment is one thing, revenge is another. One only, who is Omniscient as well as Omnipotent, can declare, 'Vengeance is Mine.'

KIRKE WEBBE.

THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER XX.—CONCLUSION.

THE suddenness of Webbe's appearance, and the boldness of a self-announcement which was nothing less than sentence of immediate death passed upon himself, literally lifted the members of the court-martial to their feet, and a hush of astonishment, I might almost say of fear, inspired by a greatness of daring, in presence of which every man there felt himself morally dwarfed, pervaded the crowded hall. Certainly the calmest, least excited person there was the privateer captain himself: true, his face was paler than usual; but he was perfectly self-possessed, and the gleaming smile which played about his cold, stern eyes, and slightly curled lips, seemed the expression of a sovereign disdain, untinged by a shade of personal fear, of the men into whose vindictive hands he had surrendered himself. I say, 'seemed' to be that expression, for could I have looked beneath the impenetrable iron mask acquired by many years' exposure to the hardening atmosphere of an ever-present mortal peril, I might possibly have seen a human heart, wildly palpitating before the immediate presence of the dread Shadow feared of all men, with whatever boldness faith, duty, pride, may enable them to confront it.

Still, not a momentary sign or hint of weakness could be discerned by the eager, vengeful eyes which searched Captain Kirke Webbe's aspect and bearing; and it occurred to me for the hundredth time that, but for that unfortunate game at leap-frog upon the quarter-deck of the *Gladiator*, and his consequent dismissal from the British naval service, on the eve of a

twenty years' war, he might have won a peerage, and a monumental tomb in Westminster Abbey.

General V éray presently reseated himself; motioned his subordinates to their places; the lieutenant-secretary nibbed his pen with a business air, and the interrogatory of the self-constituted prisoner forthwith began.

'You acknowledge yourself,' said General V éray, 'to be Webbe, captain of an English corsair lately sunk by French gun-boats off Cherbourg?'

'I repeat that I am Kirke Webbe, late captain of the *Scout* privateer, which foundered off Cherbourg a few days since.'

'And that you are the Jacques Le Gros whom the commander of the *Columbia*, an American ship, met with at St Malo?'

'It would be absurd to deny that in presence of the gallant commander of the *Columbia* himself, who, to avenge an injury done to him by a man, has endeavoured to hunt to death a stripling, as innocent of offence towards him—in a responsible sense—as yourself, Monsieur le Général. That he has not succeeded in doing so,' added Webbe, 'is solely due to the unanimous offer of the court to permit the boy to save his own life by the sacrifice of his father's.'

'You further admit,' continued the general, 'that you are the commander of the French cutter, *L'Espégle*, and, when acting in that capacity, are known as Captain Jules Renaudin?'

'Yes; and who in that capacity, it has been established by the unimpeachable evidence of the *Monteur*, beat off, with a slight vessel mounting only four guns, a British frigate of forty cannons, after a running-fight of nearly an hour's duration, in which the ascendancy of French valour, compensating for any odds, was, as ever, strikingly displayed. That, messieurs, you will in candour admit to be something *per contra*.'

Old stagers in such scenes as the members of the court were, the man's cool audacity took them completely aback, and they mutely questioned each other with interchanged looks of indignant astonishment as to whether they could possibly have heard aright. The mob of spectators, on the other hand, greeted the privateer captain's jibing sarcasm with a buzz of satisfaction and approval. The French are no doubt an acute as well as brilliant people; but for all that, he or she who could suggest a compliment to their genius or valour so outré, extravagant, that, if uttered without laughing, would not be taken by the mass of them *au sérieux*, must, according to my experience, have a great talent for invention. For myself, I was in doubt whether Webbe was comporting himself as such a man might when certain that nothing on his part could delay or accelerate the doom he had challenged, or whether he might not possibly have some expedient in reserve which would save him under all circumstances. My superstitious reliance on his fortune or 'luck' could alone have suggested the latter hypothesis. Certain it was, however, that he had at all events perfectly succeeded in impressing the court with a thorough conviction of his reckless, devil-may-care sincerity.

'The prisoner's confession is ample warrant for his condemnation to death as a spy,' said the general, looking round upon the members of the court, and gathering their, on this occasion, unanimous suffrages, given with a curt 'Oui,' or silent nod. 'Record the judgment,' he added, addressing the lieutenant-secretary.

'Stern and sharp,' interposed Webbe, 'as may be the practice of such courts as these, it permits the accused, I suppose, to speak a few words in defence or explanation, before definitive judgment is pronounced?'

'Well, yes; say on, but be brief.'

'I have first to state most solemnly—and standing as I do upon the brink of a grave voluntarily dug with

my own hands, my word ought not to be doubted—that the prisoner, William Linwood, is guiltless of the offences laid to his charge. He came to France, as Father Meudon will, if necessary, be able to clearly prove, for a perfectly legitimate, honest purpose.'

'That is true, messieurs!' exclaimed M. Meudon; 'for an entirely innocent, laudable purpose.'

'As to his assumption of the character and attire of an American and French citizen, and passing by the name of Le Gros, all that was done by my direction and advice, and with no more thought on his part, that he thereby incurred the doom, than he had of lending himself to the work of a spy.'

'I beg to reassert my thorough conviction,' said Mr Tyler, again rising from his seat, 'that William Linwood is guiltless of participation in the crimes of the privateer Webbe.'

General V éray, after briefly consulting his colleagues in an under-tone, said, addressing Webbe:

'We are disposed to place faith in your declaration as regards the prisoner Linwood, and the execution of the sentence passed against him will be respited, in order to a further investigation of his case. Have you anything to urge on your own behalf?' added the general with abated sternness—the courage and generosity of the self-immolated prisoner having somewhat won apparently upon the veteran's favour.

'Nothing that to-day would avail me!' replied Webbe; and for the first time I detected a flush and tone of anxiety—slight and swiftly passing, but distinctly discernible by me who knew him so well, and watched him with such breathless scrutiny. It resembled the irrepressible gleaming forth of the fierce disquietude of a practised gambler, when about to turn the last decisive card upon which depends success or ruin.

'Nothing that would to-day avail me! The mighty emperor who raised France so high amongst the nations of the earth, has fallen: at this moment, the crownless monarch is being ignominiously driven forth into exile by kings who are indebted for their thrones to his generous forbearance; and who is there even amongst the veterans whose scarred brows the most directly reflect the glory which he has shed over all Frenchmen, that will now respect the wishes of one so contemned, powerless, cast down, when by so doing they must render themselves odious to the Bourbons whom foreign bayonets have placed upon a throne based upon a thousand victories, won for France by the great emperor? It would be folly to expect such self-sacrificing fidelity in these degenerate days; and I knew this morning, when I saw the white flag waving from the tower of St Thomas's Church, that the time had passed when Napoleon's protection would have availed me. It may be as well, therefore, that an appeal certain to be fruitless should remain unspoken.'

I should vainly attempt to describe the effect produced by this speech. Affected, bombastic as it may sound in English ears, nothing could have been more skillfully suited to the tribunal it was designed to influence. Even the miscellaneous crowd, who, if time-servers, worshippers of the rising sun of the Bourbons, were still Frenchmen, murmured hesitating, timid applause; and General V éray, who had several times risen from his seat as if about to speak, and as often checked himself and sat down again, his keen, hard eyes flaming, softening the while, at the allusions to the past glory and present humiliation of the emperor, burst out, the instant Webbe had concluded, with:

'Perish the Bourbon flag and those who display it! It does not wave over Havre yet; and whilst I command here, the emperor's authority shall be maintained intact, supreme as when his voice gave laws to Europe! But hope not, crafty, audacious man, that assertion unavouched by clearest proof will save you. Your word is nothing; but *prove* to me that you are

under the especial protection of his imperial majesty, which could only be for some signal service rendered by you, an Englishman, to him or to France, and I will set you free, though the Bourbon and his allies were at the gates to forbid me doing so.

'The proof is easy, conclusive,' said Webbe. 'It was for a signal service rendered to General Bonaparte, and therefore to France, that I obtained the protection which, a few moments since, I had no hope would serve me in my present strait. It is true,' he added, drawing forth a folded, carefully kept paper—'it is true I am an Englishman; but'—

'What paper is that?' interrupted the general, with impatient vivacity.

'One written in a kind of hieroglyphic hand, which those who have once seen it never fail, I have been told, to instantly recognise. Monsieur le Général,' added Webbe, 'has no doubt, I perceive, upon that point.'

'None—none whatever: it is the emperor's character, and written when he was a young man. "I commend to the good offices of my friends and of all Frenchmen, the bearer of this writing—a foreign seaman who has just rendered me the greatest service that one man can owe to another.—BONAPARTE, General of the Army of Egypt." How came you by this?' sternly proceeded General Vêray; 'and what was the great service spoken of?'

'It happened,' said Webbe, in a voice which I strove to persuade myself must be that of truth—so firm, clear, sonorous did it ring through the hushed hall—'it happened that I was in Malta when the French army, on its way to Egypt, landed there and took possession of the celebrated fortress of the Knights of St John. One morning, when the wind, having become favourable, the troops were re-embarking'—

'Stop!' thundered General Vêray—'stop till you have heard me say that I was at Malta with the army, and distinctly remember all the circumstances, the minutest, connected with the deed to which, I have now no doubt, this paper refers. If you are "the foreign seaman" mentioned, you shall be instantly set at liberty; if, on the contrary, I find you to be an impostor, and if you are one, cool, astute, daring as you may be, detection is, be sure of it, inevitable—you shall be as immediately shot. Go on,' added the general, in a calmer, almost respectful tone, after having keenly marked the effect, or, more correctly, non-effect of his abrupt intimation and menace upon the privateer captain—'go on; I begin to believe you—and yet; but go on.'

'One morning,' resumed Webbe, 'when the wind having become favourable, the troops were re-embarking under the personal supervision of the commander-in-chief, a fanatical Maltese priest—a Spaniard, it was said, by birth—suddenly rushed at the general, whose back was towards him, with a naked poniard in his hand; and if he had not ended that great life, he would most certainly have inflicted a severe wound upon the Man of Destiny, had not the "foreign seaman," who chanced to be on the spot, perceived the danger in time to receive the assassin's blow upon his own arm. Here is the cicatrice of the wound inflicted by the poniard of the baffled priest,' added Webbe, turning up his right sleeve.

'Silence!' exclaimed the general, checking a movement of applause amongst the body of the audience. 'All this may yet prove, so far as the prisoner is concerned, to be an audacious fable. Where,' he added, continuing his interrogatory—'where, on what spot did the occurrence take place?'

'On the esplanade overlooking the great harbour.'

'Were any officers present with General Bonaparte at the time?'

'Not exactly present. Murat was sitting reading a newspaper upon one of the cannons a few yards off;

and Kleber had just left the general-in-chief, who at the moment was observing the embarkation through a telescope.'

'What became of the intentional assassin?'

'He was shot within five minutes of his atrocious attempt by a party of the 2d regiment of the line.'

'How is it you remember so slight a circumstance as the number of the regiment?'

'Because the 2d of the line remained at Malta, and I several times afterwards saw and even drank with individuals of the firing-party.'

'The affair must have caused a great sensation in Malta?'

'It caused no public sensation whatever, inasmuch as it was forbidden to speak of it, perhaps because a disposition to murder is thought to be epidemic. I know, at least, that one French soldier was punished for alluding openly to the matter.'

'How was it that General Bonaparte did not, in return for such a service, recompense you in a more solid manner than by a recommendation to the "bons offices" of Frenchmen, which might never have been of the slightest service to you?'

'I wished for no other recompense; and besides that, General Bonaparte himself embarked within, I should say, a quarter of an hour of the occurrence.'

'How is it that the document neither gives your name, nor states that you were an "English" seaman?'

'The omission not only of a name but of a date, as you will have observed, I can only account for by the general's hurry. As to the expression "foreign seaman," I so designated myself. It would have been as imprudent on my part, at that time, in Malta, to afford a hint or suspicion that I was Webbe, captain of the English privateer *Wasp*, as to have made a similar avowal the other day at St Malo.'

'How has it happened that you have never sought to utilise this precious document during the many years it has been in your possession?'

'My vocation as captain of an English privateer was incompatible with a request to the emperor for any other than a pecuniary reward; and I was too proud, and, I may add, not sufficiently necessitous, to ask for aims, even of a Napoleon, in recompense of what, after all, was but an act of common humanity. It is, however,' continued Webbe, 'not quite correct to say that I have made no use of so precious a document, since, but for a secret reliance that it might one day stand my puissant friend at a pinch, I might not have ventured to play the hazardous game which, but for the fortunate accident that it is General Vêray who commands at Havre, might this day have had a fatal termination.'

'And may have that termination yet,' retorted the general—'though, so much do I respect a man of nerve and courage, that I heartily wish the contrary. I shall ask you but another question,' he continued, 'and if you answer that with the same readiness and precision as you have all the previous ones, I can, and will doubt you no longer.'

The general paused before putting that last decisive question, and my pulse beat wildly, my breath came thick and short, for I again detected, or thought I did, the faint flush of disquietude which I had before observed. It had seemed to me during the last ten minutes that I was the spectator of a duel fought with flashing, fatal weapons, in which from one moment to another a mortal stroke might be given and received. That dread moment was now I believed come, and my heart sank within me.

'Your look quails not,' at length resumed the general, 'and your aspect seems to challenge and defy the menaced question; which in itself is to me a more satisfactory reply than you could make in words, for after all, one who has shewn himself to be so intimately acquainted with the Malta affair, will not find it a

difficult one to answer. Nevertheless, it shall be put. It is this: Where did General Bonaparte write this document, and where did he procure the paper and ink?

'The paper and ink were supplied by an *invalid* who had been partially crippled by an accident on board the *Guillaume Tell*, I believe, and who was just then returning from the great harbour, where he had been to write letters for such of his embarking comrades as could not write themselves. The table used by General Bonaparte was one end of a big drum.'

'Enough. I am satisfied. You are free.'

A burst of applause from the changeful crowd followed the general's decision, which was, however, sternly rebuked and silenced.

'By my authority, as the general commanding in Havre,' said General Vêray, 'I revoke and annul the findings of the court-martial upon all the accused, since it is manifestly impossible to pardon the chief offender and punish his subordinates, and I order that they be forthwith set at liberty. Record my decree in form,' he added to the lieutenant-secretary, 'and I will sign it at once.'

'Captain Lenoir,' said the general, after the formality of signing had been gone through with, 'you will escort the acquitted prisoners to their homes. As for you, Monsieur le Capitaine Webbe,' added the veteran, with a grim smile, 'I advise you to quit France without delay. A government may be installed here to-morrow from which I shall not be able to protect you, and in whose eyes the emperor's protection would be a crime, instead of, as with me, an inviolable safeguard. The court is dissolved.'

It was not long after three o'clock when I emerged from that stifling hall into the free air: in but little more than an hour I had, as it were, passed from life to death; and back from death to life! My brain swam with the rush and conflict of emotions so acute and violent, and, darting away in a kind of delirium from the escorting soldiers, I pushed my way through the crowd in I neither knew nor cared what direction, so that I could obtain sufficient space to think, to breathe in. That fevered tumult of the mind subsided, and I presently found myself in La Rue Bombardée, whither I do not now ask the reader to accompany me. There are incidents in the lives of us all before which, though an angel would smile as he looked thereon, it is imperative to draw a veil.

We dined late on that day; and I was sitting alone, as evening closed in, over the dessert, when Captain Webbe made his appearance. The torturing ordeal through which he had so lately passed, had not left a perceptible trace upon his buoyant, elastic spirits; and it was not long before I knew that his resolution to marry his son to Maria Wilson was as fixed and determined as ever. He said he should probably quit France in a few days for Jersey, though not for the reason suggested by General Vêray, as he had nothing to fear from the Bourbon government, which, there was no longer any doubt, would be formally proclaimed in Havre on the morrow.

'Which formal proclamation,' added Webbe, 'would have taken place some hours too late for us, but for my success in bamboozling the illustrious General Vêray to-day.'

'That elaborate story was then a fabrication—the imperial voucher a forgery!'

'You have an unconquerable propensity, Master Linwood, to jump at extreme conclusions: the imperial voucher was perfectly genuine, and the story, with one slight variance, true throughout—the slight variance being, that the name of the foreign seaman was Hans Kliebig instead of Kirke Webbe.'

'How on earth, then, came you in possession of the important document?'

'By a very natural sequence of causes. I was at

Malta when the attempt was made upon Bonaparte's life, and Hans Kliebig was one of the crew of the *Wasp*, which was dodging about off and on in the vicinity of the island. Hans had the misfortune to be killed a few weeks afterwards in a brush with an armed French transport, and the paper in question fell into my hands. It was not, however, till General Bonaparte and Captain Webbe had respectively become emperor and Captain Jules Renaudin, that it occurred to me that such a testimonial might some day prove a trump-card in the very ticklish game to which I was inextricably committed. And now as to matters of pressing moment. Madame de Bonneville has been arrested and lodged in prison.'

'Say you so? That is indeed a swift commending of the poisoned chalice to her own lips.'

'She is charged with having fled from her creditors, and, as a consequence, with fraudulent bankruptcy. She must, of course, be liberated by the immediate payment of her creditors in full.'

'Pray, who must of course liberate Louise Féron by the immediate payment of her creditors in full?'

'I—you—your family; all of us who, from various motives, are interested in not setting such a plotting, unscrupulous devil at defiance. In the note you received from me in the early part of the day, I apprised you that I had been compelled to compromise with her—Ah, the reverend Father Meudon, the very person I have been wishing to see and speak with!'

'That wish has been reciprocal, Monsieur Webbe,' replied M. Meudon, as he shook hands with me in silent gratulation of my escape from that day's perils; 'for I was told you were about to fight a duel with Monsieur Tyler, the American captain.'

'It was fought an hour since,' said Webbe; 'at least, I was twice fired at by Mr Tyler, which was held by the seconds to have afforded him complete satisfaction, as, not being hit, it certainly did me. I hardly need say that I did not return his fire. And now, my dear Linwood,' he added, 'I have to request, with leave of this reverend gentleman, that you inform Mrs Linwood that we, Father Meudon and I, wish to speak with her for a few minutes privately.'

'Meaning that I may not be present?'

'That is my meaning. I am anxious to consult Mrs Linwood and Monsieur Meudon upon a matter chiefly personal to myself, and for the present only them.'

'Not having the slightest wish, Captain Webbe, to force myself upon your confidence, I will at once convey your message to Mrs Linwood.'

That private council of three lasted for perhaps an hour, at the end of which, Webbe and M. Meudon left the house together without seeing me, and my mother herself not very long afterwards sent a message to say she was about to retire to rest—my father had done so some time before—and advised me, after a day of such painful excitement, to do the same.

I was in no humour to comply with such sensible advice. This avoidance of me gave strength to the suspicion which had begun to dawn upon me, that the private conference related to some scheme hatched in Webbe's fertile brain for bringing about a reconciliation, and if a reconciliation, the immediate marriage of his son with Miss Wilson. My mother was, Webbe knew, strongly desirous of promoting the match, lest, forsooth, her precious son should throw himself away upon a mere nobody, whom God had nevertheless gifted with rarest personal and moral loveliness and grace. I was not so clear with respect to Father Meudon's part in the plot, unless, indeed, they were about to attempt carrying their point by a *coup de main*, as it were, and celebrating the marriage forthwith.

Absurd! impossible!—I must have lost my senses to imagine such a thing. Equally absurd to fear, to suppose that romantic, hero-admiring Maria Wilson could possibly be induced to unite herself with the

wretched craven that, in her presence, had crawled in the dust before—been spurned, in her sight, by the booted foot of an insolent Frenchman, and resented it not. Never, never, never!

The eccentric *pas seul* which accompanied my arrival at that delightful conviction, was arrested by a brisk rat-tat at the street door, presently followed by a step ascending the stairs, which I believed to be that of Father Meudon. I was right—it was Father Meudon; his round face and black eyes sparkling with radiant bonhomie, with goodness enlivened by benevolent joy, and a few gleams, perhaps, of gratified self-esteem.

'Ah, my young friend,' he exclaimed, almost running to, and then tightly embracing me, 'allow me to again congratulate you! This is, indeed, a day of happiness. But where is madame your mother?'

'In bed, long since.'

'Madame is right, and you also ought to have been in bed long since. So ought I; but never mind, I shall not leave Havre to-night, so there is still time for me to sit down and take just one glass of wine with you. You do not know what that fierce, gentle, mean, generous Captain Webbe wished to consult Madame Linwood and me upon,' added the exulting priest. 'No, but I may tell you now, for the mission with which he intrusted me is accomplished, the object gained, completely, finally! Blessed are the peace-makers. Gloria!'

'What is accomplished completely, finally?'

'The reconciliation of two youthful lovers, whom a misunderstanding—no, not a misunderstanding, that is not true—whom, what shall I say?—a misfortune, yes, a misfortune, had estranged. Ah! the beauty, the grace, the ingenuous candour of that young girl! I give you my word,' added M. Meudon, proffering me his snuff-box, 'that never, to my recollection, have I seen a more charming person than Mademoiselle Marie Wilson. Do not be impatient, my young friend; that is no doubt a platitude to you who know Mademoiselle Wilson; but'—

'But—but me no buts,' I rudely interrupted. 'If you have anything to tell me, tell it.'

Father Meudon looked grave, almost offended for a moment, but his happy face, refusing to be wrinkled into that expression, relaxed immediately. 'You are evidently suffering from febrile irritation,' said he; 'nevertheless, I should like to make you a participator in the pleasure I have this evening experienced.'

'Proceed, Monsieur Meudon: I will listen in respectful silence.'

'Well, this is what has occurred since I left you: Monsieur le Capitaine Webbe explained to madame your mother the estrangement that had taken place between the lovers, and its cause—before known both to you and me. Madame Linwood shewed the liveliest anxiety to remove that estrangement; and when Monsieur Webbe hinted that I, as an entirely disinterested person, could do so more effectually than any one he knew, madame entreated me to exert myself to the utmost to bring about so desirable a result. I consented, the more willingly that the young Webbe's heroic sacrifice of himself to-day, rather than betray his father, had given him, spite of previous prejudice, a high place in my esteem.'

'The heroism of refusing to purchase shameful life by butchering his own father! Bah!'

'Not heroism in you, my young friend, nor in others physically and morally constituted like you, would there be heroism in such an act. You would do so as readily and instantly as you would interpose your person between your mother and the uplifted dagger of an assassin; but the young Webbe is, you know, physically, morally, a—'

'A coward! out with it—a wretched coward! You will say nothing truer than that, reverend sir, if you talk for a week.'

'Be it so; and how much greater, sublimer, therefore, the effort which enabled him to triumph over that physical and moral weakness, that— But the discussion, I perceive, irritates you, so I will just glance over the incidents of the last delightful hour, and take leave. I was to go, you understand, to the Hôtel de France, where Mademoiselle Wilson, Madame Dupré, and Mademoiselle de Bonneville, or Waller, are staying—not ostensibly as a reconciler of estranged lovers, but to speak with Captain Webbe, who would precede me there by a few minutes. Having in that manner introduced myself, it was arranged that Madame Dupré should refer to the doings at the Hôtel de Ville, and question me thereon—opportunity for me to dilate upon those agitating occurrences in a sense favourable to the young Webbe, who sat apart in an attitude of the profoundest dejection. I do not think I was ever so eloquent before,' continued M. Meudon with swelling self-esteem; 'and the result was that the way having been judiciously prepared by me, the proposition of reconciliation was made in a direct manner by Madame Dupré, and seconded, enforced by everybody. Such an appeal, judiciously prepared for as I stated, could not be permanently resisted; and at length Mademoiselle Wilson yielded reluctantly—yes, reluctantly, I must admit that—to our entreaties. With a modest grace which would have delighted you, as it did me, she rose from her chair, and gliding towards Webbe *fils*, who was fairly sobbing with excitement, said, in the sweetest voice in the world: "Let the past be forgotten, Harry"— Harry, by the way,' M. Meudon interrupted himself to inquire, 'is an endearing variation of Henry, is it not?'

Repressing with difficulty a malediction upon both Harry and Henry, I asked the priest if he had finished.

'You are ill, very ill,' said he—'that is clear, and I will no longer detain you from needful rest, than to say that the reconciliation was perfect; and that to-morrow Marie Wilson and Harry Webbe will be married by Monsieur Pousard, the Protestant minister at Ingouville—both bride and bridegroom being, unhappily for themselves, members of the heretical Anglican church. And now, my dear young friend, go to bed at once, and good-night.'

I think I must have fainted after M. Meudon went away, for I had no recollection of the interval—more than an hour—which elapsed from the time he left till I crept to bed, not to sleep, but to toss about in feverish unrest till towards the morning, when I dozed off into dreamy broken slumber, during which the terrible events of the day oppressed my struggling faculties with shadowy incongruous terrors. Suddenly light and calm took the place of darkness and tumult. I stood before an altar near a bride, Maria Wilson; but the next moment my grandame Linwood replaced her, and called upon 'Master William' to come nearer. I vainly strove to do so; my limbs seemed to be manacled, till, with the fierceness of the struggle, I awoke.

Awoke to find my dream in part realised—that good Dame Linwood was bending over and calling upon Master William to arouse himself, in a voice broken with joyful, tenderest emotion. As soon as we could speak of anything but the joy of again seeing each other, I learned that immediately upon the receipt of my mother's letter, sent through Mr Dillwhyn, Mr and Mrs Waller hurried to Portsmouth, communicated with Mrs Linwood, and hired a fast-sailing cutter, in which all three embarked for Havre, where they arrived shortly after the substitution of the white flag for the tricolor gave notice that the port of Havre was at last unsealed to the nations so long at enmity with France.

'It is late—nearly eleven o'clock,' said Dame Linwood, 'and Mrs Waller is waiting with nervous

impatience for you to rise and bring her recovered daughter to her arms. We have sent for Webbe, but he, his son, and the aspiring shoemaker who proposes to espouse Lucy Hamblin, are gone to some distance, it seems, to make arrangements for a marriage between Webbe's son and a Miss Wilson, which is to take place to-day.'

I rose at once, and hastened down stairs to the tiny drawing-room. The first person I saw on entering it was my grandfather Waller, the tall, portly gentleman of my childhood. I did not recognise him, but he greeted me with affectionate cordiality, and turning round, presented me to his wife, Mrs Waller.

Heavens and earth! Mrs Waller was Maria Wilson herself, wanting only the bloom and freshness of youthful life; and ah! now I remembered where I had seen the sweetly pensive expression of face which had so struck me when I first beheld the Jersey maiden! Mrs Waller's portrait to be sure, forgetful, senseless dolt that I had been, once shewed to me by Mrs Linwood, wore that peculiar expression, as still did the beautiful original.

Instantly I seized the clue to the whole Webbe-Féron mystery. All was clear now; and simultaneous with that conviction, was the flashing thought that I might yet be in time to prevent the detested marriage with young Webbe. With a scarcely articulate cry, intended to explain that I would bring Mrs Waller her daughter, I dashed out of the room, down the stairs, into the street, hailed a passing empty *fiacre*, and was swiftly driven off to the Hôtel de France. Maria Wilson and Clémence, both dressed as brides, were there alone, Madame Dupré herself being temporarily absent. I said they must both come with me at once upon a matter of life and death. They yielded mechanically, as it were, to the fiery impulse communicated to them, and in less than ten minutes the *fiacre* set us all three down at No. 12 Rue Bombardée. The street door opened—I seized Maria Wilson's hand—we ascended the stairs, closely followed by Clémence; and dragging the terrified girl as it were towards Mrs Waller, I exclaimed: 'Your daughter, madam, your lost child!' I heard the cry and sob of maternal recognition, and then the room, the figures swam around me, and I knew nothing more till some half-hour afterwards, when having, by the help of vinegar, burnt feathers, and other stimulants, regained consciousness, I learned that the drama had at last been finally played out. Webbe, who returned to the Hôtel de France a few minutes after we left it, at once hurried to the Rue Bombardée with the desperate hope of being yet in time to prevent Miss Wilson from seeing my mother: the Wallers' arrival he had not heard of. In presence of the scene which there awaited him, he saw that further deception would be useless, absurd, impolitic, and he at once acknowledged that Maria Wilson was the long-lost Lucy Hamblin; Clémence, the true Maria Wilson!

I have little to add, and that little must be very briefly set down. Webbe's version of his and Louise Féron's substitution of one child for another was, that till about three years before negotiations were opened with my mother, they were really not aware that there existed an indelible mark which would render the scheme of passing off the niece of Madame de Bonneville—who was really the sister of Captain Wilson's wife by the same mother, though not by the same father, and had in her younger days as often gone by the name of Broussard as Féron—for the true heiress, impossible. They believed the assertion in the hand-bill to be a mere ruse, intended to frighten the abductors into restoring the child. That discovery made, a compact was ultimately entered into by which Madame de Bonneville consented that young Webbe should marry the true heiress upon condition that she, Madame de Bonneville, received the twenty thousand

pounds odd belonging to her niece, who was to be compensated for her loss of fortune by marriage with rich—according to French ideas, rich William Linwood, my noble self. There is nothing else of importance, I think, which the narrative itself does not sufficiently explain; and now as to the results that followed the elucidation of the plot, and the defeat of the plotters, in which those readers who insist upon what is called poetical justice—a myth, I fear, which has no tribunal in this unpoetical, work-a-day world—will find themselves disappointed.

In the first place, abundant care was taken that my father's vindication before the world should be full, complete, unchallengeable. It was so; and he lived to a good old age in happiness and honour.

No one was disposed to deal harshly—I ought perhaps to say justly—with Captain Kirke Webbe; and about three weeks subsequent to the final frustration of his marriage project, he sailed with his wife and son, and something like three thousand pounds in his pocket, for the Cape de Verd Islands—the reward promised by my mother and grandmother having been paid to him. He departed in high spirits, and I must be excused for saying I could have better spared a better man.

Maria Wilson, alias Clémence de Bonneville, espoused honest Jacques Sicard, and the happy pair finally domiciled themselves in a handsome villa upon the Havre *côte*. Madame de Bonneville was supported by her niece in undeserved competence, which she did not, however, live long to enjoy. She was drowned about six months after her niece's marriage, while crossing in an open boat from Havre to Honfleur.

Light flows upon the paper as I write down the last paragraph which I shall pen—light and warmth—a pale, cold reflex of the soul-sunshine which has shed a glory over my moon of life, and now gilds the evening of my days: This, copied from the *London Times*: 'Married at St James's Church, William Linwood, Esq., grandson of Anthony Waller, Esq., of Cavendish Square, to Lucy Hamblin, daughter of Mrs Waller by a former marriage.'

Vale, vale.

END OF KIRKE WEBBE, THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.

THE FOSSIL-FINDER OF LYME-REGIS.

WHAT trifling incidents may and often do become important in the course of years! We are even tempted sometimes to view them as preternatural, or designed by Providence to be harbingers to future events.

We were led to this reflection when reviewing something we witnessed at Lyme-Regis. We were sojourning there in beautiful weather in the year 1800. A day or two before, a company of strolling equestrians had arrived, and displayed their agility in various performances; but they presented no departure in any point from what we had seen, and for many years after continued to witness in the out-of-door exhibition of vaulting, and the grand finale of Billy Button's journey to Brentford. In the middle of the performance, tickets were issued for a lottery, in which copper tea-kettles, gown-pieces, legs of mutton, and a silver watch were the prizes. In those days, no charge was made for admission into the field; the riders were remunerated by the profits upon the lottery. Good roads now enable equestrians to carry about a tent with them, and a charge is made for each admission-ticket.

On this evening, attracted by the vaulting, crowds of towns-people were seen making their way to the Rackfield, through the narrow and ancient streets of that borough, by the Cockmoile or prison, Monmouth Street, and the church.

Expecting the arrival of our invalid aunt, we had

left the crowded ring of delighted spectators standing upon the grass in a level field at the back of the town. The weather was very sultry, and the harvest was nearly in, it being the 19th of August. A passing cloud discharged a heavy shower, and crowds hastened through the streets to their homes. About five o'clock there was an awful peal of thunder, which re-echoed round the fine cliffs of Lyme Bay. Our attention was called, soon after, to a group of noisy talkers, who had an infant, for whom they wanted some hot water. A bath was procured, and the apparently dead child was bathed with ultimate success, amidst the joyful exclamations of the assembled crowd. Three dead bodies were carried home at the same time, one of whom was the nurse of the infant whom she had taken to the Rackfield. There, the three were together with the infant in arms when the shower began, and the whole ran under the dangerous shelter of an elm-tree, when the flash of lightning dealt instant destruction to all but the babe. This baby was the offspring of a carpenter and his wife, who lived near the jail. She had been a dull infant, but was dear to her parents: her name was Mary Anning.

Fifty years before the catastrophe we have described, two very important entries in the world's bulky catalogue—watering-places and geology—did not exist.

As regards the former, the sea, up to that time, was judged to be designed for commerce, and sea-side towns for the residence of merchants and fishermen. There were no migrations to the sea-side. Why should people go to the coast? and at a time when the healthy climate of Northampton was attributed to its distance from the *noxious fumes* of the sea. There were watering-places, it is true, but these were towns which possessed mineral waters. At this period, however, 1750, Dr Russel, the son of a London bookseller, wrote upon the beneficial effects of sea-water upon glandular affections; and straightway did our countrymen, like so many land-crabs, make towards sea-lodgings wherever they could find them. Dr Russel was obliged to reside at Brighton to direct the bathers, his patients, and old towns were revived in a surprising manner, and new ones founded. Brighton, Hastings, Weymouth, Lyme-Regis, &c., were metamorphosed; Torquay, Worthing, Bognor, Bourne Mouth, Weston-super-Mare, &c., sprang up from the bare shore.

As to geology? This great science was in its earliest infancy, without form or fashion. Some noble pioneers had been clearing the way; but the startling outbreak had not yet taken place. Watering-places had begun when geology was unknown. But what have watering-places and geology to do with our story? You shall hear.

The infant thus recovered, as we have told, grew up a fine lively girl. Her fate was decided by circumstances which rule most of our destinies; and it involves some interesting particulars which pertain to the history of science.

The coaches from London to Exeter passed through Charmouth, two miles from Lyme. A man named Lock, whom Dr Maton, the tourist, calls *Curiman*—that is, curiosity-man; but who is better known as Captain Cury, had for some time accustomed himself to attend the coaches. He offered for sale *curoisities* to the passengers daily, and adopted the nomenclature of the day for his fossils. There were the *bones of crocodiles' backs and jaws, ladies' fingers, John Dore's petrified mushrooms, &c.* This captain was the first vendor of *curoisities*; a Mr Crookshank, a retired London tradesman, was the first collector of such things; and soon a gentleman, named South, came occasionally in the summer in pursuit of interesting objects.

Richard Anning, the infant's father, was a carpenter, and often accompanied Mr South to the shore. When Richard found anything pretty, he placed it

upon a table in front of his residence to attract the attention of visitors. But at length Richard, when on his way to Charmouth in the year 1810, to deliver a message, taking a short-cut, fell over the cliff at the present New Cut, and died in consequence of the injuries he received. This fossil-seller's visits to the beach had made his wife, Molly Anning, very angry, as she considered the pursuit utterly ridiculous.

After her father's death, which the family, consisting of a widow, one son, and a daughter, felt sorely in a pecuniary point of view, Mary Anning went down to the shore to look for *curoisities*. She found a *cornemonius*, a corruption of *cornu ammonis*, which is now called an ammonite. Her age was then ten years. Something occurred as she was returning which decided at once her future career. A lady in the street, seeing the pretty fossil in her hand, offered her half-a-crown for it, which she accepted; and from that moment fully determined to go down 'upon beach' again, and thus find means to support the family. She did so regularly, and roamed over the ledges of blue lias left uncovered by the sea at low-water. When the layer of stone was removed by workmen or the action of the sea, a bed of marl remained. In four months after, Mary Anning saw a bone of some kind projecting from this marl. She traced the organic fossil—a crocodile as was then believed—and men she hired dug it out. H. H. Henley, Esq., the lord of the manor, purchased these organic remains for the sum of £23, intending the fossil for his private museum; but he eventually gave it to Bullock's Museum, where it was greatly admired; and the trustees of the British Museum purchased it when the Piccadilly collection and exhibition were dispersed. This so-called crocodile was no less than a specimen of the ichthyosaurus, and what a history does the name of this fossil animal present! It quite engrossed the attention of the scientific world. The great geologists, Buckland, Delabèche, Sir Everard Home, Birch Conybeare, Cuvier, and the élite of that body in this and other nations, were for six years deep in the study of the contribution from the young girl of Lyme-Regis. Mary Anning, now called with great respect Miss Mary Anning, furnished drawings of fragments, supplied deficiencies in published accounts, and proceeded to discover plesiosaurs, pterodactyles, and fish more numerous than the present sea produces. Only look round the cases of the British Museum, and you will see that the grandest specimens were found by Miss Mary Anning. The science of geology has become firmly established; honour to those who, and under no small discouragement, laboured in its infancy. Miss Mary Anning was known to Sir R. Murchison, Sir C. Lyell, Professor Owen, Agassiz, and, in a word, to the greatest savans of the age. Many illustrious foreigners made a pilgrimage to Lyme. Her death, when it took place, was a great misfortune to the town; but the inhabitants smiled incredulously when the fact was mentioned. Just so at Yverdun, Pestalozzi having gone to prison for the sum of £25, no one could see what that could have to do with the welfare of the place. One hundred and fifty residents, however, who had come from Russia and other countries to take lessons from Father Pestalozzi for a twelvemonth, returned home, and the town was nearly ruined.

Mary Anning was of rather masculine appearance. She braved all weathers, and was far too generous in allowing even wealthy visitors to accompany her in her explorations without requiring a fee, as some naturalists now very reasonably do. A cancer in the breast was the cause of the death of this remarkable character, at the age of forty-seven, on the 9th of May 1847. An obituary window has been set up in Lyme Church in remembrance of her. Who can ever hope to fill the place she occupied? Were Mary alive, I

should like to have extracted from her a list of the famous men of all countries with whom she maintained a correspondence. The Geological Society subscribed towards the window, 'in commemoration of her usefulness in furthering geology.' Molly Anning, the mother, who was quite an original, used to say of her famous daughter that she was a history and a mystery. The lower orders, who could not understand what she had achieved, remembered the deadly flash of lightning.

SIMPLE PEOPLE AND THEIR INVESTMENTS.

THERE is so much truth, sagacity, and practical usefulness in the following little article of the *Scotsman* newspaper of November 17th, that we believe we must be conferring a public benefit in helping to extend its circulation:

About joint-stock companies there lurk many obstinate and mischievous prejudices in the human mind, confusing the relations of debtor and creditor. When a merchant possessed of just five thousand pounds invests it all in boxes of indigo, and sells them at a tempting price to a buyer, who fails to pay him, he goes into the *Gazette*, of course, and the result is counted in the natural order of things, for he had his eyes open, and must have known that he ran some risk. He is to some extent, in fact, a gambler—he tables his stake, and he pays the loser's forfeit. But the retired half-pay officer, the widow, the slenderly endowed old maid, do not perceive that they may be doing precisely the same thing when they lay out their £500 in the shares of a joint-stock company. They do not speak of trading—they say they are investing. If the joint-stock company sell to unsound purchasers, or lend to precarious debtors, they risk the individual partners' money as much as if he did the same thing with it. And yet how many people, who would not entertain for a moment the notion of risking their money in trade, or of lending it to some private borrower who proposes to do so, will, without hesitation, hand it over to a joint-stock company to be gambled with as the managers may please. Nor is there generally, in times when all runs smooth, the slightest anxiety about the soundness of the 'investment,' or any curiosity to know what those who have taken the pittance into their clutches are doing with it; but there is a child-like reliance not only on their honesty, but on the extreme prudence of men generally of a class who being ever ready to risk their own wealth on the chances of extravagant profits, cannot be expected to resist the temptation of throwing other people's money into the game, especially when they are neither controlled nor even watched.

Individual thrift makes public wealth, and individual losses make public calamities. It surely tends to support the hallucination which causes these calamities, that in mercantile nomenclature the losses of shareholders are not losses to the public. It has been the boast of the Scottish banking-system that every bank truly founded on it has paid 20s. in the pound to every note-holder, and to every depositor; but how has this been accomplished? By the ruin of whole tribes of shareholders. And the shareholder, is he not a man and a brother—is not the shareholder often in the position of a helpless sister? If a hundred poor depositors have their savings restored to them, is it nothing that a hundred poor shareholders have lost all their humble investments?

There seems in the meantime no remedy for risks and disasters, such as we have been referring to, but individual prudence. In the first place, let humble investors eschew large and tempting profits or percentages, for these are the sure concomitants of risks. But further, they ought to be assured about the business of the joint-stock company in which they embark their capital, as if they were embarking it in business entirely of their own. They cannot, of course, make themselves acquainted with the several transactions of the company, but they should know that it does not speculate in fluctuating sales—like an eminent bank which speculated in indigo, an article liable to great oscillations in value—and that it does not advance money on insufficient or tainted security. It is hard, perhaps, for those who are not men of business to assure

themselves on these points, but unless they know them either through their own skill or the assurance of adepts whom they can trust, they must keep in mind that in buying shares they do not *invest* their money—they *speculate* with it. The vast enlightened enterprise—the great prosperity of the company—will be no effective substitute for such a knowledge, for the bold operations which are likely to bring it to ruin will readily invest it with these characteristics. . . . When the humble seeker of an investment sees the names of capitalist potentates in a list of directors, he should remember that these are men who can afford to gamble for great prizes at the risk of losses, and he may be none the worse of keeping in recollection the story of the giant and the dwarf who went out together to battle. Even the new arrangements for establishing companies on limited responsibility, capable as they no doubt are of very beneficial results, must not supersede individual prudence and inquiry. Let the natural limitation of the word 'limited' be duly remembered. It does not exclude the subscribed capital from loss. He who subscribes £500 to such a company is warranted against further loss, but he may lose that £500, and if it be, as it may be, all that he possesses, the limitation will be of small service to him.

THE LITTLE SLEEPER.

SHE sleeps; but the soft breath
No longer stirs her golden hair,
The robber hand of Death
Has stolen thither unaware;
The lovely edifice
Is still as beautiful and fair,
But mournfully we miss
The gentle habitant that sojourned there.

With stealthy pace he crept,
To the guest-chamber where it lay—
That angel thing—and slept,
And whispered it to come away;
He broke the fairy lute
That light with laughter used to play,
And left all dull and mute
The silver strings that tinkled forth so gay.

Then with his finger cold
He shut the glancing windows too;
With fringe of drooping gold,
He darkened the small panes of blue.
Sheer from the marble floor
He swept the flowers of crimson hue;
He closed the ivory door,
And o'er the porch the rosy curtains drew.

The angel-guest is gone,
Upon the spoiler's dark wings borne;
The road she journeys on,
Wends evermore, without return.
To ruin and decay
The fairy palace now must turn,
For the sun's early ray
Upon its walls and windows shall not play,
Nor light its golden roof to-morrow morn.

C.

NEW ROMANCE BY MAYNE REID.

On the 2d of January 1858 will appear in this Journal
the commencement of

OCEOLA:

A STORY OF THE SEMINOLE WAR.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

AUTHOR OF THE 'WAR-TRAIL,' &c.

To be continued weekly till completed.

Printed and Published by W. & L. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.